S
592 0.58 acres per capita as against 0.68 in China Proper. It is
241 difficult to obtain a picture of the land tenure system because of
427 the lack of data. But according to a field survey referred to by
Owen Lattimore covering sixty-five households in two villages
in the Khotan oasis, the smallest farm was 1.08 acres and the
S largest farm was eight acres. A further breakdown revealed that
(184) rich peasants in this group had average holdings of eleven acres,
middle peasant 5.7, and the poor peasants 2.8 acres. In the
area where this survey was conducted, it seems that the farms
of the poor were too small for the efficient use of draft animals
and there was the problem of efficiently employing, on a tiny
farm, the labor potential of the large Uighur family. (Pivot of
Asia, p. 169.)

S 4. Forestry
311 There is forest land in the rich Ili valley but it is questionable
313 whether much timber can be exploited without serious damage to
the soil. Since much of Sinkiang is desert and wasteland there
are few forest reserves; out of the total Sinkiang area only about
five per cent is forest land.

C. Kansu, Shensi, Ninghsia, and Chinghai

N 1. The setting
133 J. L. Buck refers to this part of the Northwest as the spring
134 wheat and winter wheat-millet area. In the spring wheat area
(243) (northern Kansu, Ninghsia, and Shensi) high hills, small moun-
tains, and narrow irrigated valleys characterize the best agricul-
tural land. But along the great wall in Shensi, Ninghsia and Kansu
are many undulating sand dunes extending from ten to seventy
miles both northward and southward. When the Mongols occupied
this region, these dunes were covered with grass and shrubs, but
where the Chinese settled here, they cultivated the slightly more
fertile land in the depressions between the dunes; once the grass
was destroyed the winds blew the sand so as to make farming im-
possible and other nearby good soil was covered with the blowing
sand. Grass in such land can seldom be resodded, and it is thus
that land once useful, at least for pasture, is now entirely destroyed.

N The winter wheat-millet area (southern Kansu, Ninghsia, and
133 Shensi) extends over a great part of a loess-covered plateau, a
134 high, dissected peneplain, carved largely from red or purple sholes
243 and conglomerates, covered with deposits, largely lacustrine, and
blanketed by wind-blown dust, known as loess, which varies in
thickness from about twenty to more than 150 meters. The fields
in this region are very irregular and small, and most of the sur-
face is so eroded that cultivation is difficult and much terracing
is necessary.

N The climate is cold, dry, and windy in winter. The typical
132 precipitation is low, about fourteen inches, and exceedingly

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than to make a detour along an easier line. The summit is about 6000 feet high. A little further along this range to the west is the famous Hua Shan, one of the sacred mountains of China. The Chinese call this pass Ch'inling, though as a matter of fact it is not the watershed.

Travel in China always seems to consist either in trekking across infinite plains or of following up and down river valleys and gorges to and from an endless succession of passes.

This pass is the boundary between the districts of T'ungkuan and Lonan, and a better boundary there could hardly be, for one can almost stand with a foot on either side of the range.

From the top of the pass the path drops steeply for a few hundred feet and then continues for 15 li down a picturesque well-timbered valley to the market village of Hsünchien Ssu, a pleasant little place lying at the junction of two clear mountain streams and surrounded by wooded slopes with pheasants calling in the maize fields. Though one is still in the Yellow River basin, i.e. on the headwaters of the Honan Lo, the bare stony mountains and loess plains of the North have been exchanged for the well-watered pine-clad valleys of Central China.

The next day's march, another long one, brought us to Lonan Hsien. The road continued down the wooded valley for three or four hours' march to the market village of Shihchia P'o where rice cultivation appeared (rice is grown up to about 4000 feet in Shensi), and then turned up a side ravine and crossed a low pass in a range of bare hills giving access to the valley of the Lo Ho, which was followed up to Lonan Hsien. The latter is a small place lying well away from the main roads amongst flat open valleys of red clay backed by mountains, a sort of plateau supported between two series of ranges of the Ch'inling Shan. These shallow valleys contain the headwaters of the River Lo (sometimes referred to by the Chinese as the Honan Lo to distinguish it from the Shensi Lo, the chief river of the latter Province), which flows east past Honan Fu (the old Loyang) to join the Yellow River.

A glance at the map showed our next objective to be the district city of Shang Chou, and as there did not appear to

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Hanyin T'ing, now called Hanyin Hsien, a third class district, is a prosperous little place lying at the head of the fertile Yo River valley, and, like most of the Han basin towns, is more like a Szechuan than a Shensi city. 694

From Hanyin to Shihch'uan Hsien is a day's march, called 90 li. The path continues westwards up the narrowing valley leaving the main stream which comes down from the north on the right hand. After about 15 li the valley ends in low hills skilfully terraced into rice fields, up which the trail runs to reach a low divide, some 600 feet above and two hours' march from Hanyin. This is the first obstacle to a Hsingan-Hanchung railway, but from here on till it reaches the eastern end of the Hanchung plain near Yang Hsien there will be many difficulties to surmount. From the pass the track, entering the district of Shihch'uan, descends through a defile and then through terraced rice fields amongst the red clay hills to the valley of the Ch'ih Ho, a stream flowing down from the north, and reaches the township of Ch'ihho P'u, 45 li from Hanyin and at about the same elevation. The same mountain range, which is further on pierced by the Ch'ih Ho in a gorge, continues on the left hand and the same red clay hills on the right. The path continues down the valley for an hour's march, and then leaves it to climb over a spur to the north, and so into the valley of the Han, here no wider than the river bed, and flowing from north to south. For the rest of the way to Shihch'uan the trail runs up the Han along the mountain side on the left bank. 487 133 [243]

Shihch'uan, a third class Hsien, lies right on the river. It is an important strategic point in these parts as the trail from Hsian across the Ch'inling Shan *via* Ningshan T'ing here debouches on to the Han and the Hsingan-Hanchung road. [361]

The next stage to Ch'a Chen, called 80 li, is a rather dangerous one for pack animals. Crossing the Han by a ferry the trail runs up the gorges of the Han, a smaller edition of those of the upper Yangtzu, being ledged in the cliff-side some distance above the water. In places it is narrow and there are some corners which are difficult to negotiate; but we met with no accidents, partly because the assistance so constantly rendered to us by the local officials included repairs to bad and dangerous portions of the trail. [491]

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Hanchung, now officially known by the name of the district as Nanch'eng, is a first class Hsien, and is one of the three or four wealthiest and most populous cities in the province. It lies in the centre of the rich cigar-shaped plain of the Han valley, surrounded by mountains, and in its situation and general appearance much resembles a smaller edition of Chengtu in Szechuan. Two crops, wheat followed by rice, are regularly raised on the plain. A considerable quantity of silk is also produced and some cotton. The situation of Hanchung in the centre of the most fertile region in the province and at the point of intersection of four trade routes, south to Szechuan, west to Kansu, north to the Wei valley, and east down the Han to the coast, has made it a considerable trade centre. For the same reason it has always been one of the richest and most important likin stations in the province, where the Chinese officials, as elsewhere, do their best to throttle the transit trade and kill the goose which lays the golden eggs by the excessive imposition of dues and tolls. There are few more lucrative offices in the province than that of Superintendent of the Hanchung Likin.

Hanchung is the administrative capital of the upper Han basin, and is the seat of a Taoyin and a Chenshoushih. The position of the former is that of Civil Superintendent of the magistrates in his jurisdiction. It is nowadays less important than it was in the days of the Manchus. Since the abolition of the hierarchical system of Tao, Fu, Chou, and Hsien, the territorial administration is entirely in the hands of the district magistrates acting directly under the Civil Governor of the province. Thus the magistrates correspond directly with the Governor and send copies of their despatches and reports to the Taoyin, so that the latter is short-circuited and the abolition of the post is sometimes advocated as being superfluous. Under the old system the Hsien reported to the Chou, the Chou to the Fu, the Fu to the Tao, and the Tao to the Governor, each being responsible for the acts of his subordinate. The position of Chenshoushih is that of a General with powers of military administration. At the present time, when things are more or less unsettled and the military rule the roost, a Chenshoushih often has powers which amount practically to those of an independent

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road, here a good cart track, runs across an undulating wheat prairie, dotted with hamlets and walled farms, with the Wei River out of sight on the right hand, and the great barrier of the Ch'inling mountains on the left. Three townships are passed, Yapei, Hengch'u, and Huaiya, the second being of some interest as the home of a famous Sung Dynasty philosopher. The amount of wheat grown on these plains of Central Shensi is very great, especially nowadays since the suppression of opium cultivation. There is no better wheat flour in China than that of Shensi, and it forms the staple food of the population, eaten in the form of bread (*mo*) and macaroni (*kua mien*). With this excellent wheat flour, good mutton, and plenty of game in the mountains, the foreign traveller is well off as regards food. A sound rule for travel in the interior of China is to avoid all tinned foods and rely on native supplies cooked in foreign style; the former only increase one's baggage loads and are quite unnecessary; native food made up in the native style is unappetising to most foreigners as well as being dangerously dirty.

Mei Hsien, a second class district city, is a small place, but like Chouchih is the centre of a rich agricultural region comprising the plain between the Ch'inling Shan and the River Wei. The latter flows a few li to the north of the town. The city has suffered greatly from rebellions and brigandage during recent years.

From Mei Hsien to Fenghsiang Fu is called 110 li, but the road being good and mostly level, the distance can be covered in one long march. The Wei River, in the dry season a thick yellow stream a hundred yards wide and few feet deep, is crossed by a ferry and the road then runs westwards with the river on the left hand and a loess bluff on the right for 35 li to the village of Ts'aichia P'o. At the time of our visit this low-lying land was almost entirely devoted to indigo and dotted with the peculiar-looking brick pits in which the plants are mashed in preparing the dye. This is an old industry revived on account of the scarcity of aniline dyes. The indigo forms a useful rotation crop for the relief of the land exhausted by the everlasting wheat. We saw little else but wheat, cotton, and indigo during our tour of the loess of Central Shensi, growing on

T.T. the uplands, river plains, and irrigated lands respectively.

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the uplands, river plains, and irrigated lands respectively. Leaving Ts'aichia P'o the road climbs the loess bluff to the north, emerging on an undulating plain 500 feet above the river, this being about the usual thickness of the loess deposits in Western Shensi, and then runs N.E. across wheat-growing prairies, past numerous hamlets and walled farms, ascending gradually to reach Fenghsiang Fu.

Fenghsiang Fu, now a first class Hsien, lies at the western end of the open Wei valley, where the mountains of the Kansu border meet the Ch'inling Shan and bring these fertile loess plains to an end. It is a large city and used to be quite an important place, but its commercial prosperity, destroyed during the rebellions and other troubles of the past six years, has not yet revived. The inhabitants have a bad reputation, and, like the town of Paochi on the Wei River a day's journey to the south, it has in the past been a hotbed of the Ko Lao Hui. Its position near the junction of the Ch'in Chou road into Kansu and the high road to Szechuan gives it some importance, and cart tracks radiate from it across the plain in all directions, ceasing abruptly at the foot of the mountains.

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From Fenghsiang to Yao Chou by this route is a distance of about 510 li, and thence to Yenan another 530 li.

Leaving Fenghsiang Fu by the East Gate the trail soon turns off the main road to the N.E. and runs across the plain for 20 li to the foot of the hills. Crossing a spur a few hundred feet high the path then descends into the ravine of a stream which is followed up for two hours' march to the hamlet of K'angchia Ho. The surrounding mountains are all of loess terraced for the cultivation of wheat and maize, with the scattered inhabitants living mostly in caves. In this neighbourhood we came across some chikor of exceptionally large size (the handsome red-legged partridge of North China), the only occasion on which I have seen them in the loess. These birds are called *Shih Chi* (stone fowl) in the mountains of Northern Chihli, where they are common, frequenting bare stony slopes. They are found in large coveys, which seldom fail to make their presence known by their characteristic call; but they are most difficult to shoot, as they are inveterate runners, always up hill, and, being very strong, carry a great deal of shot; the only way to get them is to descend on them from above. They are excellent eating, but not so good as the little brown partridge with a black patch on the breast, also fairly common in the mountains of the North. Throughout our journeys in Shensi and Kansu, however, we saw very few partridges compared to pheasants.

From K'angchia Ho the trail runs up a branch of the stream to the N.E. for a few li and then strikes up the hill side, and following a ridge between two ravines ascends gradually to reach a pass (4300 feet), the boundary between Fenghsiang and Linyu districts. There is much uncultivated land on these mountains, the grass-grown terraces gradually becoming obliterated; this is a common sight throughout Northern Shensi and Kansu, and together with the many ruined villages points to a decrease in population, supposed to be due to the ravages of the great Mahomedan rebellion of fifty years ago, but perhaps also due to a gradual desiccation of this region. All around are loess ridges and ravines in bewildering confusion; but there appears to be a sort of watershed trending S.E., a range which is known further east as the Ch'i Shan. From the pass there is no immediate

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through which the path descends to reach the township of Ch'angning Chen, winding to and fro to avoid the rifts, the heads of ravines and valleys breaking away south and south-east.

The harvest time on these immense wheat prairies which was now approaching is a period of intense activity. The crops are of course gathered entirely by hand, and large numbers of labourers from Kansu, groups of whom we were constantly meeting, come down to assist; after the harvest is over in the Wei valley plains they work back across the plateau of Western Shensi to their native highlands, harvesting as they go. In good years there must be a large surplus of wheat in Shensi and Kansu available for export; but in the absence of waterways and railways the means of communication are so bad that it would be impossible to move the harvests to any distance.

From Ch'angning the path runs in a northerly direction across the plateau, winding about to avoid the impassable rifts, for about 20 li, where it reaches the Ching River, flowing in a deep narrow cañon some 800 feet deep. There is a steep descent into this gorge, and the Ching River, an unfordable torrent of liquid mud, is crossed by a ferry. This cañon exposes clearly the depth of the loess covering, some five or six hundred feet, the stream having carved itself a bed still deeper down in the underlying rock. The track climbs out of the gorge to the top of the plateau a similar height on the further side, and then runs across the undulating uplands for 15 li to the village of Kao Ts'un in the district of Pin Chou, 90 li from Yungshou. This is a tiring march, including the passage of the Ching Ho, for on the small roads of Northern Shensi the li are apt to be very long.

From Kao Ts'un the track continues N.E. for another 30 li to the village of T'u Ch'iao (4400 feet), in the district of Sanshui, now called Hsünyi Hsien, the highest and most northerly point on the plateau reached between Yungshou and Ch'unhua, whence it runs S.E., descending gradually with the slope of the land, for 45 li, to the large village of T'ungshen Kou. So far the trail by keeping to the north had avoided the crevasses in the loess, but as soon as one turned S.E. they began to be met. Thus between T'u Ch'iao and T'ungshen Kou three streamlets flowing in

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but here and there the remains of old terraces, evidently abandoned for many years, are noticeable. Descending from the pass this curious zone of comparatively rich vegetation is soon left behind and one approaches Yenan by a desolate looking valley between hills of sandy, barren loess. The
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crops are miserable in the extreme, and consist mostly of millet, little or no wheat being grown. Three to four hours' march down this valley brought us to the gates of Yenan Fu.

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CHAPTER VI

FROM YENAN AND YENCH'ANG THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS OF EASTERN SHENSI BACK TO HSIAN FU

Yenan—American attempt to exploit the oil deposits of Northern Shensi—Yench'ang—Yich'uan—Brigands and soldiers in Northern Shensi—Hanch'eng—How to travel in comfort—Hoyang—Ch'engch'eng—P'uch'eng—Fup'ing—Sanyuan—Baptist Mission—Cotton cultivation—Back in Hsian.

YENAN FU, now known as Fushih Hsien, a second class district city, is a large place in area as cities in Northern Shensi go, but is nowadays extremely poor and dilapidated as the result of the constant depredations of brigands in the neighbourhood, most of the shops in the main street being deserted. It is built in the narrow valley of the Yen Shui, which it completely fills at this point, and like Fu Chou it has guarded this passage into China against the inroads of the Tartar hordes from the North for thousands of years. On the hill side opposite are some remarkable cave temples of great antiquity, one of them containing innumerable (said to be ten thousand) little figures of Buddha carved out of the sandstone rock. The neighbourhood appears desperately poor and the crops very backward, the little wheat we saw being still green and barely in ear during the first half of June, though the elevation is only about 3000 feet. Northern Shensi and N.E. Kansu appear to be drying up and turning into desert, perhaps owing to the existence of a little-known range of mountains in Shansi, just east of the Yellow River, which, rising in places to a height of over 10,000 feet, must act as a barrier against the moisture-laden winds from the coast. Coal and iron are said to be abundant in the neighbourhood, but lack of means of communication renders them useless except for local consumption. Petroleum is also found in Northern Shensi, and the attempts to exploit these oil deposits have been, apart from rebellions, revolutions, and brigandage the most important events of recent years in this region.

In the past mineral oil used to leak out of the ground

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Yakub Beg. In 1895 he had risen to be commander-in-chief of the Kansu forces and despatched troops to aid in the suppression of the Mahomedan rebellion near Sining in that year. In 1900 he commanded an army of Kansu braves in the attacks on the Legations, and subsequently arranged for the safety of the Imperial Court during its flight to Hsian Fu. Being proscribed by the Foreign Powers after the collapse of the Boxer movement he was cashiered and sent back to Kansu in disgrace, where he resided on his large estates in some state till his death about ten years ago. His rôle was loyalty to the Manchus through thick and thin, and his example in this respect has been followed more recently by the other Mahomedan leaders, who were ready to remain faithful to the cause of the fallen dynasty even after the abdication in 1912. Had Yuan Shih-k'ai not been at the head of affairs then, and had T'ung Fu-hsiang still been alive, the Mahomedan North West would perhaps have refused to accept the Republic, with disastrous results to the neighbouring provinces.

From Wat'ing the road runs up a ravine to the west, reaching the foot of the Liupan Shan after 15 li, whence it ascends by a series of zigzags to the summit of the pass, a grassy ridge about 9000 feet high. There were many big carts making the ascent, a most arduous business effected by relays of animals. Here again, as often on our journeys, we had reason to congratulate ourselves on having a caravan of good pack mules instead of carts. The Liupan Shan is a prominent range of mountains rising far above the loess, which crosses Kansu from N.W. to S.E.; it is probably a continuation of the chief range of the Nan Shan, which is crossed by the main road west of Lanchou at the Wushao Ling (10,000 feet) and through which the Yellow River breaks its way in a series of precipitous gorges between Lanchou and Chungwei. From the pass there is a steep drop of about a thousand feet, and the road then descends through a dreary barren valley to Lungtê Hsien, a most miserable little city almost entirely in ruins, 50 li from Wat'ing. The loess country west of the Liupan Shan is much more barren and desiccated than on the P'ingliang side, and round Lungtê the poor-looking wheat crops were only just showing above ground towards the end of May.

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li out cultivation and houses are reached at Kaochia Ta Men, the beginning of the large Chenfan oasis, and for the rest of the stage the road runs through rich irrigated lands with occasional excursions into sand dunes.

Chenfan Hsien is a prosperous little district city in a highly fertile oasis. Immediately round the town is a belt of rich cultivation, and patches of irrigated land occur in the desert for 200 li to the north. There are no villages in these oases, the people living entirely in walled farms. Wheat is the main crop raised, and the abundant water supply from the snow-fed streams for irrigation purposes, combined with an almost rainless climate, appears to assure good crops with machine-like regularity. Chenfan compares favourably with most towns in Kansu, the streets are clean and well kept, there is a noticeable absence of ruins, and the shops display a surprising variety of goods. At the time of our visit the district enjoyed the services of one of the best territorial officials we met throughout the North West, a young man who really appeared to have the interests of the people at heart, and to devote himself as far as lay in his power to improve their lot. He remarked that the post, though so isolated, was pleasant enough in the summer, but that in the winter the north winds from the Alashan desert were terrible, much worse than the severest winter sand-storms ever experienced at Peking. The inhabitants of the surrounding oases seem entirely cut off from the rest of China, and form little self-supporting communities. Chenfan itself, however, is, strange to say, in direct communication with Tientsin and the coast by means of a much frequented camel route from Kueihua Ch'eng to Liangchou across the Mongolian grass country and the Alashan desert. This road, which debouches from the desert at Chenfan, enables the Mahomedans of the Ho Chou and Hsining neighbourhood to communicate with the coast without passing through Chinese Kansu at all.

From Chenfan we had to proceed to Hsining, the frontier town on the high road to the Kokonor and Tibet. Enquiries showed that we had the choice of two roads, to the north or south of the snow mountains behind Liangchou respectively. As the latter would have meant retracing our steps to Kulang, we decided to follow the former, which entailed going due

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nominally responsible to the Chinese officials at Hsining. Mongol tribes are found living in the bend of the Yellow River, near the Golok country, and even as far south as the country between Jyekundo and Nagchuka towards Lassa, but appear to have become completely Tibetanised, and to retain only the tradition of their origin.

Yungan is a replica of Êpo, only poorer, an old walled post with the interior almost entirely in ruins. It lies not far from the Tatung River, surrounded by grassy downs and overlooked by rocky snow-capped ranges. One is here on the reverse side of the outer barrier range of the Nan Shan, the snows of which provide the water for the streams which fertilize the Liangchou oases. This portion of the Kokonor border is the meeting-point of the four widely-spread races of High Asia, Chinese, Mahomedans, Tibetans, and Mongols.

From Yungan to Pei Tatung is another long march of over 100 li. The trail runs east and then south-east across undulating grass prairies dotted with herds of yak for 45 li to a solitary inn or ranch known as Paishui Ho, whence it continues across a plain, gradually approaching the Tatung River, to reach Pei Tatung. The going is excellent across grass all the way. Pei Tatung, lying on the left bank of the Tatung River, is another walled village mostly in ruins. Barley is grown in the neighbourhood, the first cultivation met with since entering the Pien Tu K'ou from Maying Tung. The valley of the Tatung River in this neighbourhood consists of a rich grass prairie bounded on either side by rocky snow-capped ranges; to the south the mountains approach close to the river; to the north they rise on the other side of the plain. Between Kueitê on the Yellow River and Kanchou in Western Kansu the Nan Shan consist of three huge parallel ranges, dividing off the valleys of the Tatung, Hsining, and Yellow rivers. We were now between the two highest and most northern of these ranges.

The following day's march occupied us from dawn till eight o'clock at night, the distance being called 100 li but entailing the passage of the Tatung River and of a high pass known as the Tapan Shan. The river, some eighty yards wide (in August), deep, and very rapid, has to be crossed immediately on leaving Pei Tatung. Men and loads

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tion comes to an end, and the fertile plain gives way to a sandy waste. Eventually, after some twenty-seven to thirty hours of actual drifting down stream from Chungwei, exclusive of halts, we reached the walled fort of Hung Ch'eng, which is, so to speak, the port of Ninghsia, lying on the right bank at the point where the Great Wall and the main trail from T'aiyuan *via* Suitê to Ninghsia strike the Yellow River. Behind it the land rises in sandy uninhabited downs, the beginning of the Ordos desert. The river is here about three-quarters of a mile wide and is crossed by a ferry. Ninghsia lies 40 li inland on the opposite side.

As our ponies had not yet turned up on their overland journey from Chungwei we found ourselves stranded on the river bank opposite Hung Ch'eng, until the Ninghsia authorities, learning of our arrival, sent some animals down to meet us. The trail to Ninghsia leads across a strip of waste land five li in extent stretching along the river, and then runs for the rest of the way through irrigated fields, mostly under rice, traversing several large irrigation channels. There is probably more rice (though of an inferior kind) grown on the Yellow River plains between Ninghsia and Chungwei than anywhere else in China north of the Ch'inling Shan; but also this was the only region in Kansu where we were troubled by mosquitoes, the elevation being under 4000 feet. We spent a few days in Ninghsia, being hospitably entertained by the Mahomedan General and other officials. It is a large town, and a political and commercial centre of some importance, but the interior is very dilapidated and poor-looking. It is the centre of trade with the Mongols of the Ordos and the Alashan (the latter really the name of a Mongol state rather than a mountain range), chiefly in wool and sheep and goat skins; a particularly fine lamb-skin, called *t'anyang p'i* is a noted local product, as well as felts and carpets. An old Ninghsia rug is of considerable value anywhere. The local Mahomedan General, Ma Fu-hsiang, who is also a sort of Military Governor of North-Eastern Kansu, is one of the leading Mahomedans of the Province, and represents a fine soldierly type of Chinese Moslem. He served under T'ung Fu-hsiang in Peking in 1900 and commanded the Dowager Empress' escort on the retreat to Hsian. The Manchus had no more loyal servants

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were fired at us from the bank, though our boatmen and escort were uncertain whether they came from brigands or from soldiers signalling us to stop; the river being wide, however, and the current swift we did not trouble to enquire. In many places when tied up to the north bank we found the ground pitted with small holes, the work of the liquorice root diggers. This is an old industry which has revived considerably of late owing to a foreign firm commencing to buy the produce for export. The liquorice-producing areas in the world appear to be limited in extent, and this is one of them. Twenty-four hours above Paot'ou the Wula Shan mountains are reached, a bare rocky range running a little inland along the north side of the river, and a prominent landmark from afar. In this neighbourhood the Ordos bank, hitherto uninhabited desert, begins to be populated, and Mongols and Chinese are to be seen with many camels, sheep, and ponies grazing on poor-looking downs. As Paot'ou is approached farms and villages become numerous on the north bank, and the plain between river and mountains is a vast corn-field.

Paot'ou Chen (also known as Hsi Paot'ou) is a large walled town lying a little way back from the Yellow River in the corn-growing plain which slopes up towards the Tach'ing Shan, a continuation of the Wula Shan. It is remarkable in many respects; in the first place it is essentially a new and growing place, unlike the dilapidated and hoary old towns of Kansu, and is the centre of a fertile corn-growing area which a generation ago was unoccupied except by a few Mongols and their flocks. There is probably plenty more good land waiting to be opened up further west, north of the Yellow River, and the curious spectacle may here be witnessed of the Chinese colonising Canadian-like prairies within the borders of their own republic. Secondly, as well as being a cleaning and repacking centre for the Tientsin wool trade like Shihchu Shan, it is evidently a commercial centre of considerable and increasing importance for the import and export trade of the vast hinterland to the west. We found more evidence of trade activity in this isolated town than in any city in Kansu. Unfortunately, situated as it is on the very outskirts of Chinese civilization, Paot'ou appears to have suffered greatly from the prevailing

T 756 Tibetans are said to have a good remedy for the latter. They are said to induce a sort of protective disease in their animals so that their animals do not contract the diseases as often or as severely. They kill young, sick animals when they are in the recuperative stage and feed their meat and blood to well animals. After this the latter are said to be sick for almost a week and eat nothing, but afterward they are immune, the mamba said. This "medicine" is largely bought from the Ngolok by the Koko Nor Tibetans and Mongols. But by the time it reaches the north it is usually spoiled and then it is reportedly not very efficacious. /345/

C ●243 563 On July 14 we reached Ikhe gol. Here, at 3,185 meters, we came upon barley fields which the Barun Mongols had planted. I had also seen some in the lower Yogh'ore Valley. They were capable of being irrigated but looked extremely poor. I never again saw such uncared-for fields. The Mongols maintain that they are able to cultivate the same field only every six years. Then only do they plow their fields and sow thinly between the huge clods of earth, without harrowing or fertilizing. The weeds which grow up during the long period when the fields lie fallow are almost never removed, so that it was difficult for me to distinguish between cultivated and uncultivated acres. The Ts'aidam Mongols are surely the laziest farmers in the world. For this reason they are obliged to get the largest part of their barley supply in Dankar.

C 133 From our camp along the Ikhe Gol we soon came out of the mountains. But we were obliged to march from morning till night in order to find a new pasture for our animals. The way led over a desert of stones, over the Piedmont gravel, the schala (Mongolian) of the Tsaidam Basin. The edge of the mountains, from which the Tibetan highland descends into the Tsaidam Plain, runs west-northwest to east-southeast. The declivity consists of completely barren, savagely cut-up crests which, toward the north, sink into the yellowish, weather-beaten dust and gravel of the schala. The latter is only very sparsely covered with desert plants, with tamarisks and other low shrubs. The bullocks reluctantly and very laboriously stamped over the sharp-edged stones of the ground. (Plate LXXVII). The farther west I came, the drier became the character of the landscape, and the more signs of vegetation disappeared. With every step it became more like a desert. For a long time now there had been no more small woods in the border-mountains, and the grass patches also dwindled noticeably.